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# Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SPTA-02 EB-08 AID-05 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01
ICA-11 /079 W
----------045415 011024Z /14
R 311513Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8666

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PN
SUBJ: PROTESTERS SINGIN' IN THE RAIN

1. DODGING RAINDROPS, A GROUP OF SOME 400 PROTESTERS MARCHED THROUGH DOWNTOWN PANAMA CITY THE MORNING OF AUGUST 30, ENDING UP AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE TO COMPLAIN TO PRESIDENT LAKAS ABOUT THE HIGH COST OF LIVING IN PANAMA. WITH THE PRESIDENT LISTENING FROM THE BALCONY, AND LATER DESCENDING TO MEET THE GROUP FACE-TO-FACE, THE MARCHERS -- MAINLY WOMEN AND STUDENTS -- SANG THE NATIONAL ANTHEM AND GAVE VOICE TO THEIR ECONOMIC WOES. ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORTS, AN "IMPRUDENCE" BY SOME OF THE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING -- ABOUT 200-250 SECONDARY STUDENTS FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FORMED THE CORE OF THE PROTESTORS -- LATER FORCED THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE HIS LEAVE.
ALTHOUGH THE SCENE WAS OTHERWISE PEACEFUL, IT NO DOUBT WAS NOT THE WAY LAKAS WOULD HAVE CHOSEN TO SPEND HIS BIRTHDAY. THE DEMONSTRATION WAS ORGANIZED BY A LOCAL RADIO COMMENTATOR, BALBINO MACIAS, WHO, WITH THE SUPPORT OF OTHER RADIO STATIONS, HAD BEEN PUBLICIZING THE EVENT FOR SEVERAL DAYS.
2. A SPOKESWOMAN FOR ONE OF THE GROUPS TAKING PART IN THE MARCH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE ARE WORLD, NATIONAL,
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AND LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES RESPONSIBLE FOR INFLATION AND RECESSION IN THE PANAMANIAN ECONOMY, BUT CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO RESTRUCTURE "CERTAIN MECHANISMS" TO REDUCE THE COSTS OF RENTS, TRANSPORTATION, WATER, ELECTRICITY, EDUCATION, MEDICINE AND FOODS. SHE CONCLUDED WITH THE LAMENT, "MR. PRESIDENT, FOR MOST PANAMANIANS, THE DILEMMA IS DESPERATE. THE HIGH COST OF LIVING DOES NOT

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LET US LIVE ... AND THE HIGH COST OF FUNERALS KEEPS US
FROM DYING."

3. COMMENT: THE LADY'S POINT WAS WELL TAKEN. PANAMA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS CAN HARDLY BE CONSIDERED MINOR, AND PEOPLE DO SEEM TO BE GETTING MORE RESTLESS ABOUT THEM. APPARENTLY WELL AWARE OF THE SITUATION, TORRIJOS SPOKE THE OTHER DAY OF HAVING ORDERED A REVIEW OF WAGE SCALES FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AND OF INCREASES IN WAGES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S CAPACITY TO FINANCE THEM. NEVERTHELESS, OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS LIKE UNTO THAT OF YESTERDAY CAN BE EXPECTED. DIKEOS

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NNN

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# Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994
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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED
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**Control Number:** n/a
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**Draft Date:** 31 aug 1978
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a
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**Secure:** OPEN
**Status:** NATIVE
**Subject:** PROTESTERS SINGIN\' IN THE RAIN
**TAGS:** PINS, ECON, PN
**To:** STATE
**Type:** TE
**vdkvgwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ca1ea45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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